REMARKS

Claims 21-32, 35, 36, 40-43 and 47-48 remain pending in the present application. By the present amendment, claims 21, 26, 31, 35 and 40 have been amended, claims 44-46 have been canceled, and claims 47 and 48 have been added.

In the attachment to the Advisory Action mailed March 7, 2001, the Examiner disagreed with Applicants' arguments. Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertions made by the Examiner in paragraphs 3 and 4. With respect to paragraph 4, Applicants would like to point out that claim 26 recited "etching a contact hole in said overlayer and an amount of said layer." It did not recite "etching a contact hole in said overlayer and undesirably etching said layer" as Examiner seemed to be saying it does. However, Applicants have amended claim 26 to more clearly describe the overetching.

Applicants have amended claim 21 to recite "etching a contact hole in said overlayer and in an overetch amount of the substantially vertical component" to more clearly describe that which is claimed. Support for this claim language is found on page 10, lines 3-26. Applicants submit that claim 21 is not taught by the art of record and request that claim 21 be allowed. Claims 22-25 depend from claim 21. Since claims 22-25 depend from an allowable claim, they are themselves allowable.

Applicants have amended claim 26 to recite "etching a contact hole in said overlayer and an overetch amount of said layer of said first conductive material ... wherein said overetch amount is an amount necessary to account for variations if forming said first layer of material and said layer of said first conductive material" to more clearly describe that which is claimed. Support for this claim language is found on page 10, lines 3-26. Applicants contend that claim 26 is not taught or suggested by the art of record and request that claim 26 be allowed. Claims 27-30 depend from claim 26, which Applicants have shown to be allowable, and are therefore allowable themselves.

Applicants have amended claim 31 to recite "forming a contact in said overlayer and in said vertical component" to more clearly define that which is claimed. The art of record fails to teach or suggest forming a contact in an overlayer and a vertical component of a conductive layer. Support for this claim language is found on page 10,

lines 3-26. Applicants request claim 31 and claim 32, which depends from claim 32, be allowed.

Applicants have amended claim 35 to recite "forming a contact hole in said overlayer and in said localized thick region" to more clearly define that which is claimed. The art of record fails to teach or suggest forming contact in an overlayer and in a localized thick region. Support for this claim language is found on page 10, lines 3-26. Applicants request claim 35 and claim 36, which depends from claim 35, be allowed.

Applicants have amended claim 40 to recite "forming a contact through the overlayer and in the thick region" to more clearly define that which is claimed. The art of record fails to teach or suggest forming a contact through the overlayer and in a thick region. Support for this claim language is found on page 10, lines 3-26. Applicants request claim 40 and claims 41-43, which depend from claim 40, be allowed.
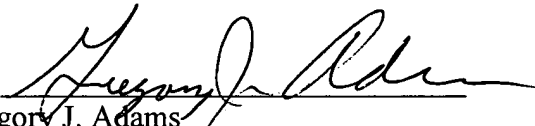
Applicants have added claims 47 and 48 which include claim limitations not taught by the art of record. Support for this claim language is found on page 10, lines 3-26.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned to resolve efficiently any formal matters or to discuss any aspects of the application or of this response. Otherwise, early notification of allowable subject matter is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

KILLWORTH, GOTTMAN, HAGAN &
SCHAEFF, L.L.P.

By _____
Gregory J. Adams
Registration No. 44,494

One Dayton Centre
One South Main Street, Suite 500
Dayton, Ohio 45402-2023
Telephone: (937) 223-2050
Facsimile: (937) 223-0724
e-mail: adamsg@kghs.com